

Testimony of the Michigan Campaign Finance Network on HJR GG
House Elections and Ethics Committee, June 4, 2014

Chairwoman Lyons and Members of the Committee:

I testify in opposition to House Joint Resolution GG for one reason: Unless, and until, the drawing of representative districts is removed from the control of overtly partisan actors, election of members of the State Board of Education by district is likely to result in representation that does not reflect the collective will of voters of this state.

I illustrate this concern by including with my testimony a chart of *effective vote* for the last eight election cycles in Michigan. The effective vote metric represents the percentage of the representative delegation won by each party divided by the percentage of the vote won by each party. In a pure democracy the effective vote for both parties would be 1.00. That is, the percentage of the representative delegation and the percentage of the vote should be the same, for each party.

The table clearly shows that deviation from an effective vote of 1.00 for both parties is greater for larger representative districts. That is, deviation is smallest for the Michigan House and greatest for the Michigan delegation to the U.S. House. That is because there are more opportunities to make choices in drawing district lines that yield partisan advantage in larger districts.

The greatest deviation from representation reflecting votes occurred in the 2012 vote for delegates to the U.S. House of Representatives, when Republican votes literally yielded twice as much representation as Democratic votes: an effective vote of 1.41 for Republicans, and an effective vote of 0.70 for Democrats. That was a stunningly effective partisan gerrymander.

It goes without saying that representative districts for the Michigan Board of Education would be larger than Michigan's U.S. House districts, because there would be fewer of them. Therefore, opportunity for perversion of the voters' collective will would be greater than it was in the 2012 U.S. House vote.

I urge you to set this resolution aside. Your energies would be better spent by passing a resolution to place the function of drawing representative district lines in the hands of a commission that is disinterested from partisan political outcomes.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Rich Robinson", written over a horizontal line.

Richard L. Robinson
Executive Director

Effective Vote
How Votes Translate to Representation

MI House	1998	2000	2002	2004	2006	2008	2010	2012
Republican votes	1,473,800	1,919,869	1,520,395	2,201,727	1,624,975	1,962,242	1,645,620	2,040,126
vote %	49.8%	48.2%	50.2%	48.2%	44.7%	42.2%	53.0%	45.6%
Republican Representatives	58	58	63	58	52	43	63	59
% of body	52.7%	52.7%	57.3%	52.7%	47.3%	39.1%	57.3%	53.6%
effective vote: % body / % vote	1.06	1.09	1.14	1.09	1.06	0.93	1.08	1.16
Democratic votes	1,455,442	2,016,994	1,498,865	2,332,501	1,979,748	2,682,484	1,413,587	2,387,756
vote %	49.2%	50.6%	49.3%	51.0%	54.5%	57.8%	45.5%	53.4%
Democratic Representatives	52	52	47	52	58	67	47	51
% of body	47.3%	47.3%	42.7%	47.3%	52.7%	60.9%	42.7%	46.4%
effective vote: % body / % vote	0.96	0.93	0.87	0.93	0.97	1.05	0.94	0.87

MI Senate	1998	2002	2006	2010
Republican votes	1,556,762	1,532,170	1,647,059	1,688,851
vote %	52.3%	50.1%	45.0%	53.8%
Republican Senators	24	22	21	26
% of body	63.2%	57.9%	55.3%	68.4%
effective vote: % body / % vote	1.21	1.16	1.23	1.27
Democratic votes	1,388,711	1,506,920	1,968,080	1,404,868
vote %	46.7%	49.2%	53.8%	44.7%
Democratic Senators	14	16	17	12
% of body	36.8%	42.1%	44.7%	31.6%
effective vote: % body / % vote	0.79	0.86	0.81	0.71

U.S. House - MI	1998	2000	2002	2004	2006	2008	2010	2012
Republican votes	1,438,283	1,786,991	1,465,178	2,284,181	1,624,865	2,114,293	1,671,707	2,238,540
vote %	48.2%	43.9%	48.0%	49.3%	44.5%	45.7%	52.3%	45.6%
Republican Representatives	6	7	9	9	9	7	9	9
% of delegation	37.5%	43.8%	60.0%	60.0%	60.0%	46.7%	60.0%	64.3%
effective vote: % deleg / % vote	0.78	1.00	1.25	1.22	1.35	1.02	1.15	1.41
Democratic votes	1,469,111	2,117,678	1,507,174	2,221,524	1,923,485	2,516,640	1,415,212	2,487,243
vote %	49.2%	52.0%	49.3%	48.0%	52.7%	54.3%	44.3%	50.7%
Democratic Representatives	10	9	6	6	6	8	6	5
% of delegation	62.5%	56.3%	40.0%	40.0%	40.0%	53.3%	40.0%	35.7%
effective vote: % deleg / % vote	1.27	1.08	0.81	0.83	0.76	0.98	0.90	0.70